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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: PA SAYS ARAB LEAGUE TO FACILITATE FATAH-HAMAS  
DIALOGUE; PLO COMMITTEE MEETS TO "ADVANCE YEMENI INITIATIVE"

REF: A. JERUSALEM 978  
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 946

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Fatah leaders report that the Arab League will facilitate PLO-Hamas "comprehensive national dialogue" as requested by President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen). Al-Ayyam Chief Editor Akram Haniyah told the Consul General that Abbas announced his initiative to preempt others in the Arab world from proposing their own reconciliation efforts and to define the parameters for this process. Haniyah said PLO-Hamas talks are not likely to produce an agreement in the near term, but having the dialogue helps Abbas' domestic standing and will expose Hamas' divisions. Azzam al-Ahmad and other Fatah contacts said the June 7 meeting in Dakar between mid-level Fatah and Hamas officials was an unofficial effort without substantial conclusions. A PLO ExComm-appointed committee to advance the Yemeni Initiative met June 8 and voted to demand that national dialogue with Hamas must include all PLO parties, not only Fatah, and that the purpose of dialogue is implementation of the Yemeni Initiative, not renegotiating the content of that Initiative. End summary.

Arab League to Facilitate PLO-Hamas Talks;  
Talks To Be Based in Cairo  
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[1](#)2. (C) Fatah PLC bloc leader Azzam al-Ahmad and other PA contacts told Post that Saudi King Abdallah and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak agreed in meetings with PA President Abbas that the Arab League will facilitate PLO-Hamas "comprehensive national dialogue." These contacts said the Arab League will create a special committee to advance Abbas' call to implement the Yemeni Initiative. According to Al-Ayyam Chief Editor/Abbas confidant Akram Haniyah and al-Ahmad, PLO-Hamas talks will be centered in Cairo, which Abbas and the PLO feel is the setting that will best protect their equities. (Note: Fatah contacts report that King Abdallah made it clear to Abbas that the Saudis welcome and will support PLO-Hamas dialogue, but will do so only through the Arab League after the Saudis' negative experience with the February 2007 Mecca Agreement, which quickly collapsed and embarrassed Saudi King Abdallah. End note). For Hamas' part, spokesman Ismayil Radwan publicly denied that Cairo would be the venue for talks, arguing that many Arab League states are willing to be hosts and the location of talks is a matter for Fatah-Hamas discussion.

Dakar Talks "Unofficial, Not Substantive"  
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[1](#)3. (C) Azzam al-Ahmad and other Fatah contacts said the June 7 meeting in Dakar between PLO Ambassador to Senegal Hikmat Zayid and Hamas Politburo member Khalid Imad al-Alami were unofficial efforts carried out on Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade's invitation (Note: Wade is the current head

of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). End note). Fatah contacts assert that the meeting lacked substantial conclusions. Hamas leader Osama Hamdan told press that the Dakar meeting had been arranged before Abbas' June 4 speech calling for dialogue and had no tangible results. He added that it served to test the parties' seriousness and "could be a positive beginning" for future talks.

Akram Haniyah: Abbas' Initiative Puts  
Hamas on Defensive, Preempts Rival Plans  
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¶4. (C) Al-Ayyam Chief Editor Akram Haniyah told the Consul General on June 10 that Abbas announced his "comprehensive national dialogue" initiative on June 4 to preempt others in the Arab world from proposing their own reconciliation efforts and to define the parameters for this process. By defining implementation of the Yemeni Initiative as the ground rules for dialogue, Haniyah said Abbas ensured broad PLO ExComm support and exposed Hamas' divisions. Haniyah said PLO-Hamas talks are not likely to produce an agreement in the near term, but having the dialogue helps Abbas' domestic standing.

PLO "National Dialogue" Committee Heavy  
on Minor Parties, Demands PLO Context  
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¶5. (SBU) According to its Fatah and minor party members, the PLO ExComm-appointed committee to advance implementation of

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the Yemeni Initiative is designed as a policymaking forum and will not directly participate in talks with Hamas. In their first meeting on June 8, committee members voted to demand that national dialogue with Hamas must include all PLO parties, not only Fatah, and that the purpose of dialogue is implementation of the Yemeni Initiative, not renegotiating the content of that Initiative. Most of the committee members are from smaller PLO parties and there is only one member (Tayib Abd al-Rahim) from the Fatah Central Committee (FCC). The initial committee members and their factional affiliations are:

- Bassam al-Salhi, Palestinian People's Party
- Abd al-Rahim Maluh, PFLP
- Qays Abu Layla, DFLP
- Tayib Abd al-Rahim, Fatah
- Azzam al-Ahmad, Fatah
- Ahmad Abd al-Rahman, Fatah
- Wasal Abu Yusif, Palestine Liberation Front (Abu al-Abbas Movement)
- Salah Rafat, FIDA
- Mahmud Ismayil, Arab Liberation Front
- Samir Ghushah, National Struggle Front

WALLES